

→ 90E - Project Atlas

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File: Park

Ballistic Culture and Target Cities

Kyong Park

→ The idea of initiating ~~STOREFRONT~~... began a few years ago when I came across an article in *The New York Times* about a group of abandoned missile bases sited around Plattsburgh Air Force Base. The fact that they are now publicly owned meant that we could at last look into these facilities that were supposedly built for us yet were off-limits to us. And these monuments that once held the power of our existence should not be left to disappear without any critical examination.

Technology governs changes in human affairs while culture guards continuity, Hence technology is always disruptive and creates crisis for culture.

---Daniel Bell, "Technology, Nature and Society" in *The Winding Passage: Essays and Sociological Journeys 1960-1980* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980)

What compelled us to invent and harness such power? Are these aims indispensable for our progress toward the reputed age of immortality, or are they the final stroke of mortality for all ages? Are they in service to our own survival, or are we in service to their existence? These are some of the enduring questions at the balance between science and humanity, and perhaps we should address them once again through critical examination of these ballistic artifacts.

Gravity pressed us down like worms, but a gravity-free environment would make the poor equal to rich, and be freer than a bird in flight.

--Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, *Free Space* (1883)

→ Technology, the means that manifested these missiles, ideolized the deliverance of unlimited goods and knowledge to its believers. And to many others the spirit of aeronautics personified a flight of liberation from the ever-present social hierarchy that weighed upon terrestrials like gravity. Together, these aspiring ideologies lead man to speculate that perhaps the conquest of outer space will lead to the resolution of earthly struggles.

We must master the highest technology or be crushed

--V. I. Lenin, (1919)

However, practical and strategic application of technology ultimately prevailed over its ideological aspirations, as the funding for its development came increasingly from the military. Its products became the very measure of the success, legitimacy and security of the political and national entity, and therefore Sputnik was a crucial event in consolidating state sponsorship for research and development of technology for military use. Soon the prestige and reputation of nations depended on the magnitude, accuracy, distance and reliability of ballistic arms, particularly the ICBM, to build military industrialism into the largest single economic structure of this century. By enlisting society to largely dedicate itself to the research and development of nuclear and ballistic arms, the military became the dominant user of the technology. The public hardly controlled the directions and purposes of the technological pursuits; they were only a mass to be persuaded. In complying, the public was allowed to use various technological fall-outs and by-products that had already lost their innovative quality and value for the military use.

The panel [Technological Capabilities Panel of 1954 included James F. Killian, president of MIT; Lee A. DuBridge, president of Caltech, James B. Fisk, later president of Bell Labs; James Phinney Baxter III, president of Williams College; Edwin H. Land, inventor of the Poloroid^a camera] recommended the highest national priority for the USAF ICBM program, an IRBM suitable for land or shipboard launch, rapid construction of a distant early warning (DEW) line in the arctic, a strong and balanced research program on the interception and destruction of ballistic missiles, a greater application of science and technology to methods of fighting peripheral wars, and especially an increase in intelligence capabilities.

---Walter A. McDougall, ...*The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age*, New York (1985)

Under these conditions, Technocracy, the management of society by technical specialists and industrialists became the dominant polity that made both capitalism and communism more irrelevant and less distinguishable. For North America, the transformation of the cultural and physical landscape by the technocracy of ballistic weapons is far more encompassing than we are aware. Depopulation of urban cores to lessen massive deaths, dispersion of population to the suburbs to increase survival rates, the building of interstate highways for the mobility of arms and population, and open space and slum clearance for firebreaks and evacuation lanes were some of the many security measures that played a major part in the erosion of the finite definition of the city since the Second World War.

Mitsushige, who was a photographer for the Hiroshima newspaper Chungoku Shimbun, found himself confronted at one point in his wandering with a street car full of dead people. "I went up to it and looked inside . . . It was jammed with people. They were all in normal positions, holding onto streetcar straps, sitting down still, just the way they would have been before the bomb went off. Except that all of them were leaning in the same direction-away from the blast. And they were all burned black, a reddish black, and they were stiff."

--Jonathan Schell, from the Introduction to *At work in the field of the bomb* by Robert Del Tredici, New York (1987)

Congregation with other humans implied the potential to become a target, and self-sufficient habitation was life insurance for doomsday. Physical proximity was unwanted, and permanent settlement suggested insecurity, all antithetical to the traditional form and sense of community, prescribing a nomadic way of life for our future. We are now more self-sustaining, individualized, alienated, fragmented, dispersed and mobile than ever before. And these may be the precise requirements to inhabit outer space, to live in a community of crews, drifting inside a self-sufficient capsule in a vast space, so separate and so distant from the nearest community of the same kind.

We are dealing with the death of optimism, rather than the death of art. All of that engineering elegance and efficiency born of rational, industrial solutions that was to make a better world . . . did not bring a new dawn. It brought an era of more gigantic problems in the nature of life and survival than history has even known . . . Next to the reality that produces an ABM, the monuments of architects often seem like arbitrary toys.

→ --Ada Louise Huxtable, *A Bizzare^{gr} Monuments to Non-Architecture* The New York Times, 14 December 1975

Even if doomsday never arrives, the radiation particles and their waste will long challenge our terrestrial habitability. This war against our environment is something that we, the allies and the enemies of all other wars have mutually constructed and are equally responsible for, potentially transforming this planetary shelter into our collective enemy. Together with various social conditions during the Cold War, the ballistic missile developments may once again serve their original mandate, the exploration of outer space. But this time they may become our habitat.

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

This world in arms is not spending money alone.

It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities.

It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. . . .

We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat.

We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people. . . .

This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

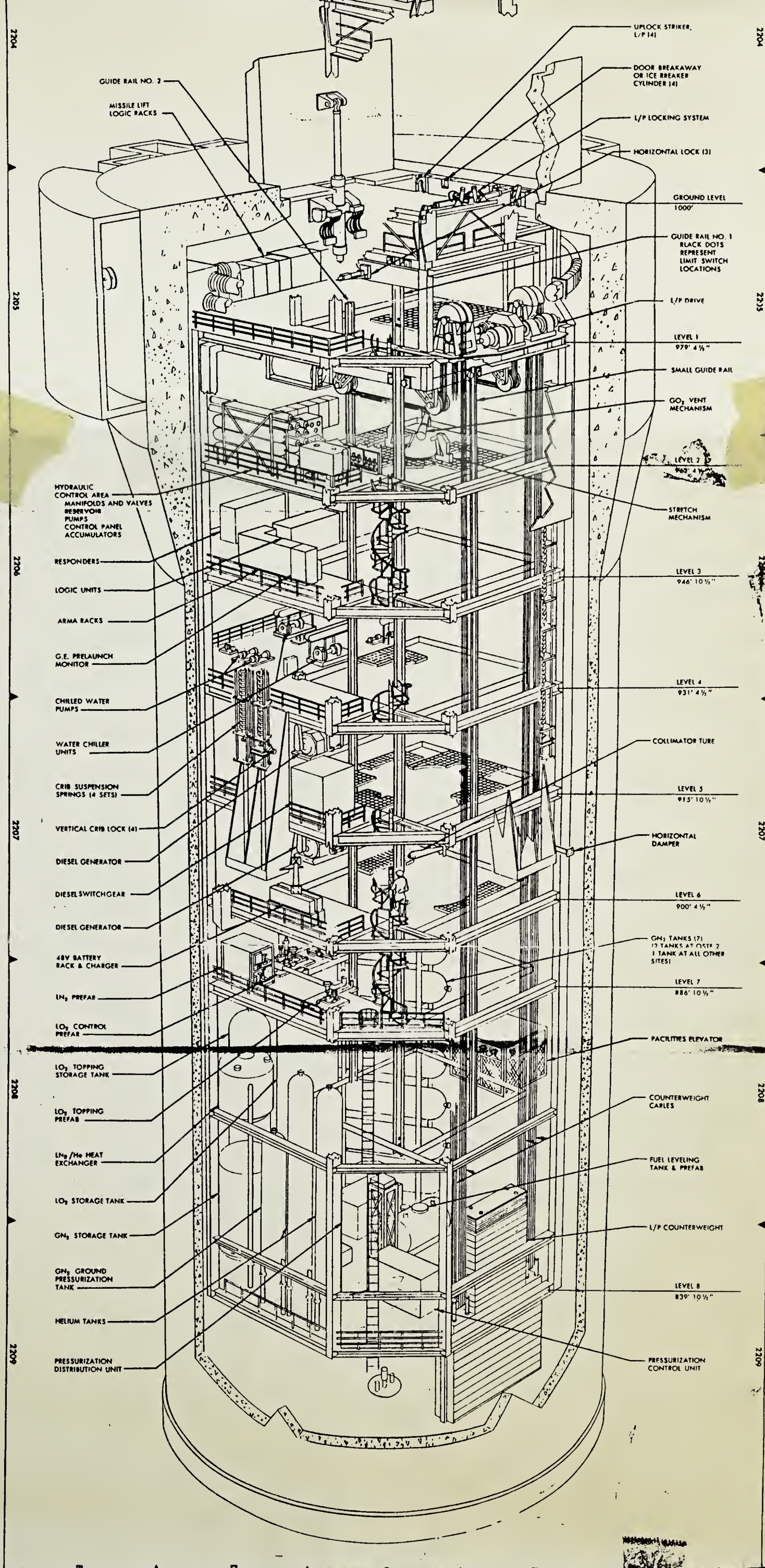
--Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Chance for Peace*, 1953

But we are still inhabitants of this planet and possessors of technology. And if the recent global changes of political boundary will transfer the means to conduct world conflicts and collaborations from military to economic forces, then the ideologies and institutions of military industrialism will also be obsolete. Consequent possibilities are phenomenal opportunities for reconsideration of the present social structures and ideologies, and perhaps the reacquisition of control over our destiny from the futility of the nuclear age. Equally, ballistic missiles stripped of nuclear arms can symbolize a liberation of technology from the military, implying that technology can still be a positive instrument for social betterment.

When she was 12 years old, Sadako Sasaki contracted leukemia from earlier exposure to the atomic bomb. She did not wish to die. She refused all painkilling medication and took literally a Japanese proverb that says, "If you fold 1,000 paper cranes, you will get whatever you wish." She folded 645 of the tiny birds before she died.

--Robert Del Tredici, *AT WORK IN THE FIELD OF THE BOMB*, New York. 1987

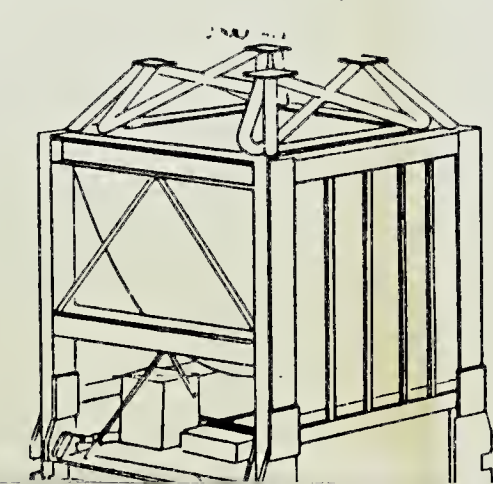
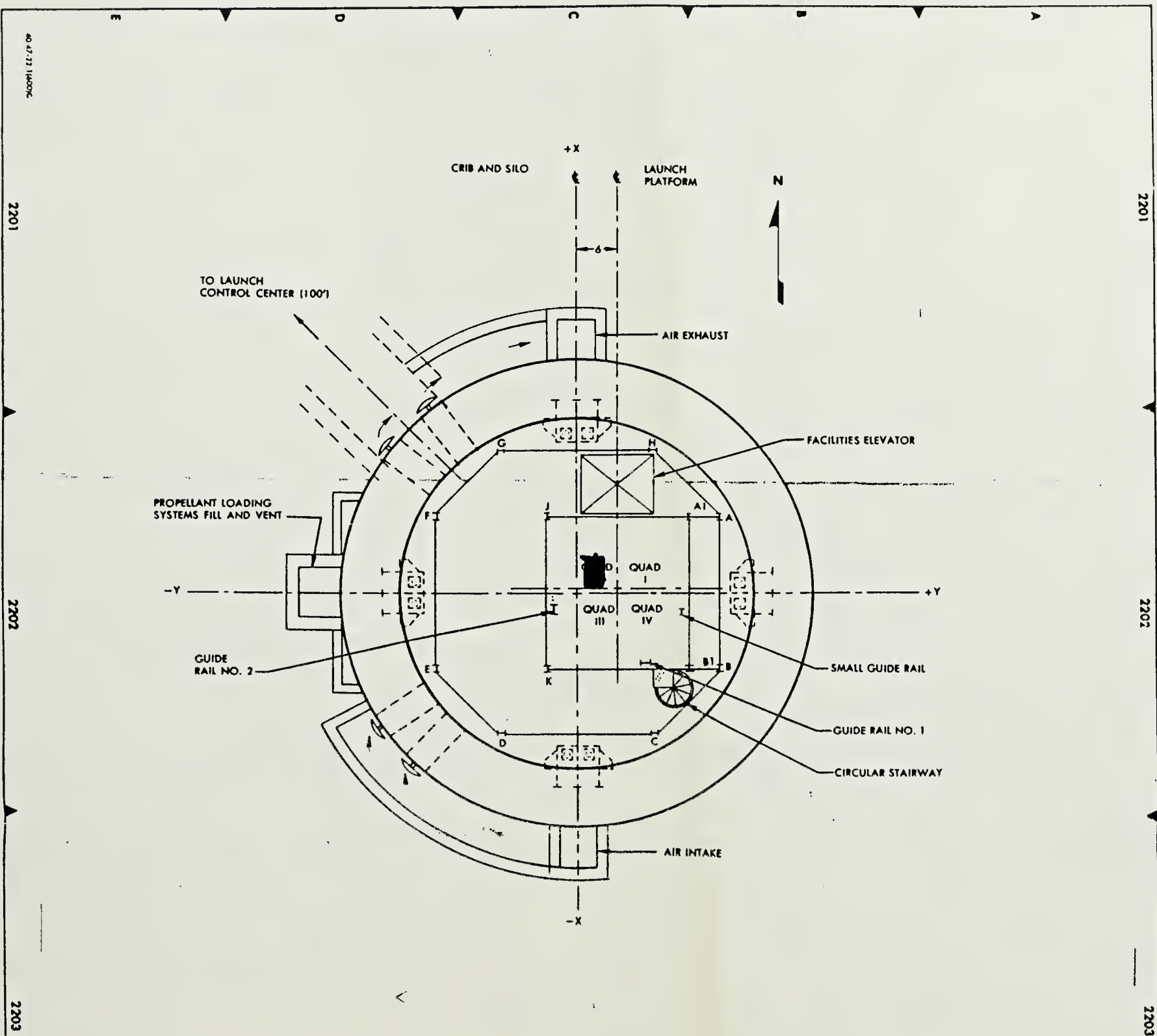
Thus our future is bound to the question of how we will cope with our past. Perhaps these ballistic missiles are a means to expose some of the predicaments, and ask how we can transform the contaminated landscapes and toxic wills of the past. In my mind, this is the basic notion of Project Atlas. Through the transformation of an artifact, art and architecture can intervene to shape or contradict the forces that make the world, and define new and positive agendas.

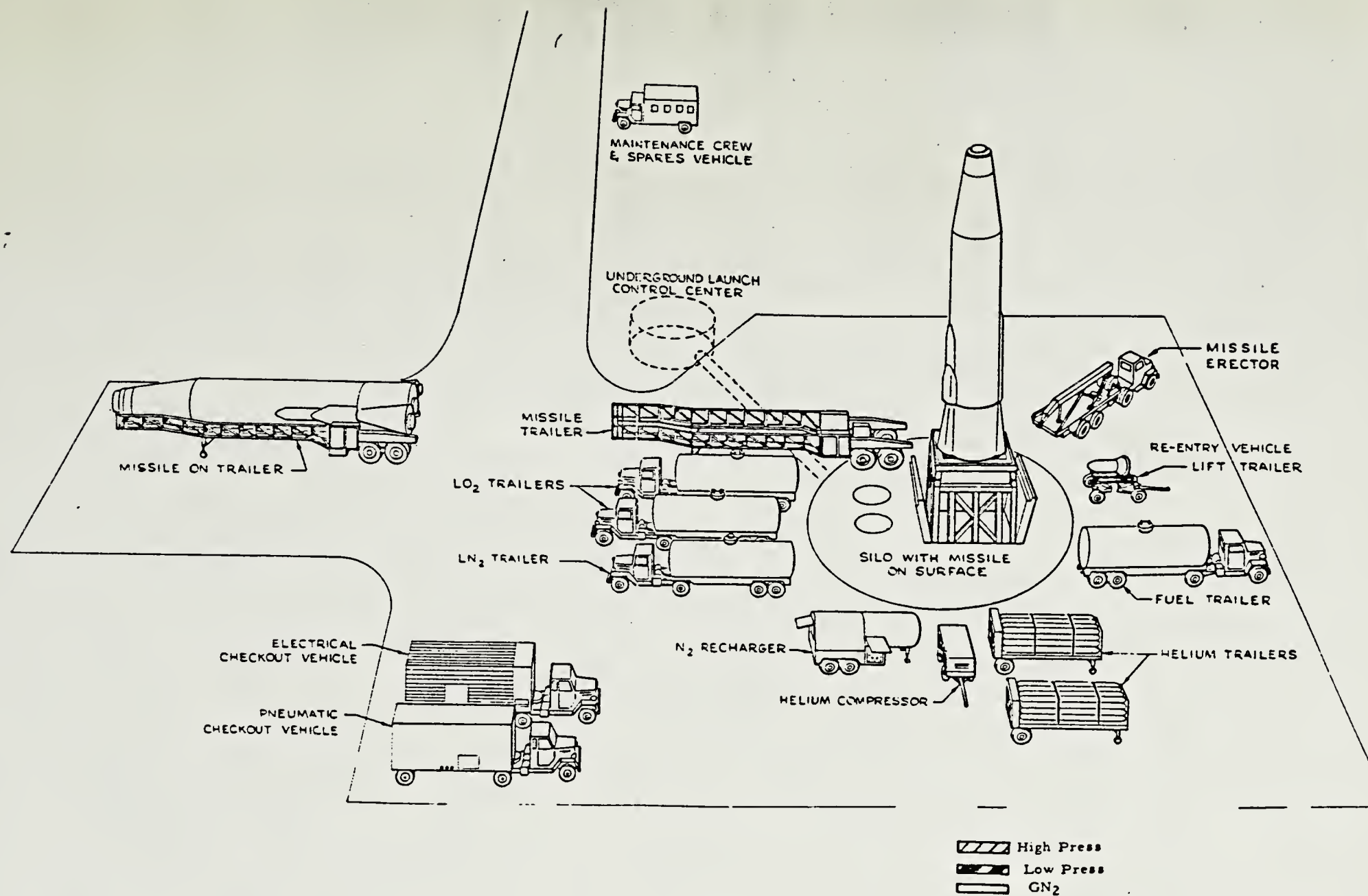


Changed 22 April 1964

Figure 1-4. Silo and Associated Hardware (Sheet 1 of 12)

24 7/8
28 7/8

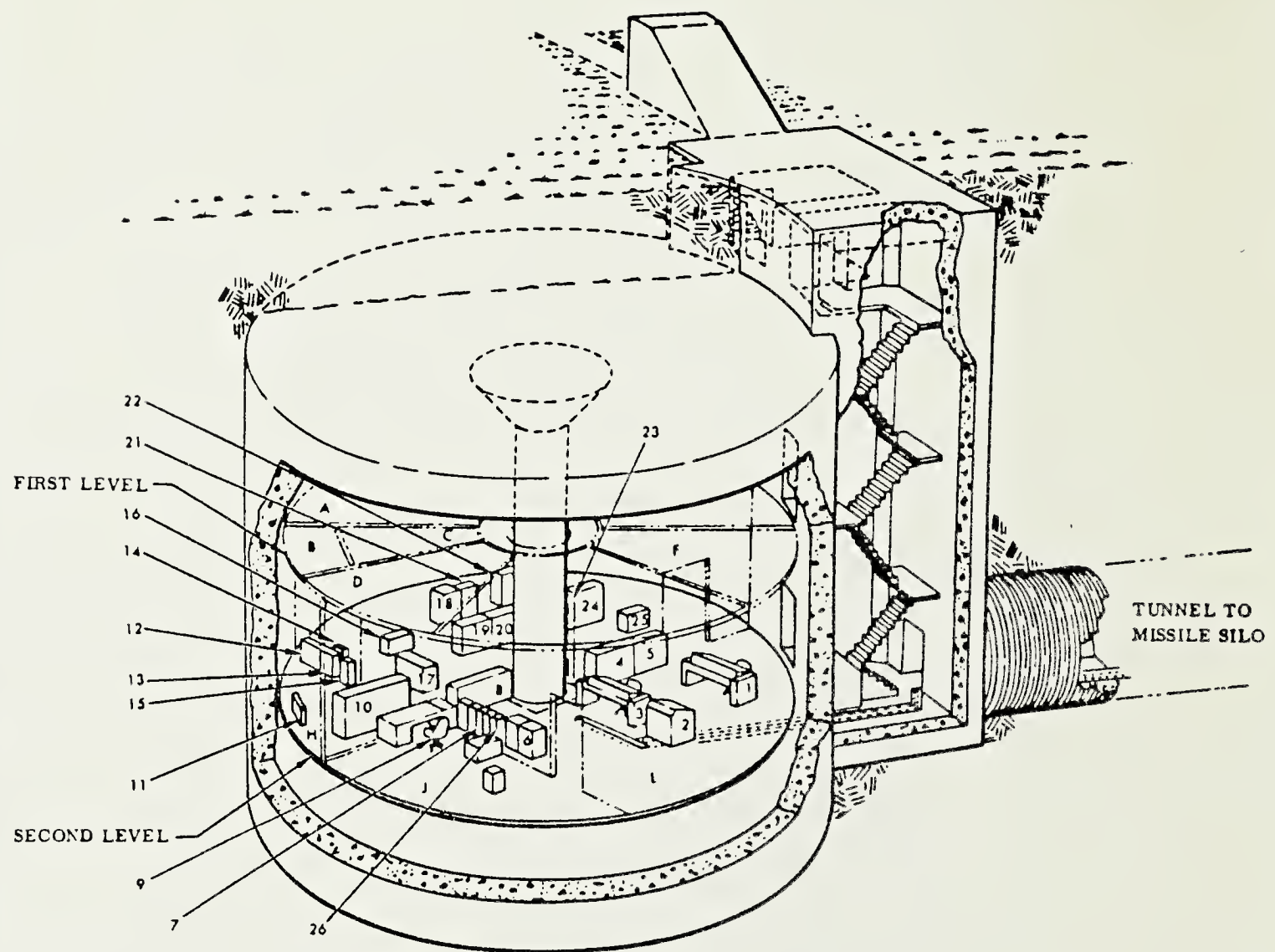




Mobile AGE-Launch Complex
Figure 1-6

1-10

General View of Typical Atlas missile site. Missile is lifted above ground to launch position by an elevator. Key elements are the underground silo where the missile is stored & maintained, and an underground launch



EQUIPMENT KEY

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 ALTERNATE COMMAND CONSOLE (ONE PER SQUADRON) | 17 MAIN DISTRIBUTION FRAME |
| 2 IRSS CONSOLE (TEST AND TRAINING SITES ONLY) | 18 POWER BOARD |
| 3 LAUNCH CONTROL CONSOLE | 19 FINDER CONNECTOR BAY |
| 4 FACILITY REMOTE CONTROL PANEL | 20 SELECTOR BAY |
| 5 POWER PLANT REMOTE CONTROL PANEL | 21 MISCELLANEOUS RELAY TRACK |
| 6 TV MONITOR | 22 X-MINUS-TIME CLOCK BAY |
| 7 FIRE ALARM PANEL | 23 REGISTER BAY |
| 8 EXIT AND EMERGENCY LIGHTING PANEL | 24 TRANSLATOR BAY |
| 9 NORMAL LIGHTING PANEL | 25 STRATEGIC ALERTING SOUND SYSTEM BAY |
| 10 LIGHTING DISTRIBUTION PANEL | 26 LIGHTING DISTRIBUTION TRANSFORMER |
| 11 MOTOR CONTROL CENTER | |
| 12 OFFICE EQUIPMENT | |
| 13 BATTERIES AND BATTERY RACK | |
| 14 TELEPHONE TERMINAL CABINET | |
| 15 PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM CABINET | |
| 16 COMMUNICATIONS POWER-DISTRIBUTION PANEL | |
| 17 COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT PANEL B | |
| 18 CHARGER BAY | |
| 19 MISCELLANEOUS TRUNK BAY (DIRECT LINES) | |

AREA KEY

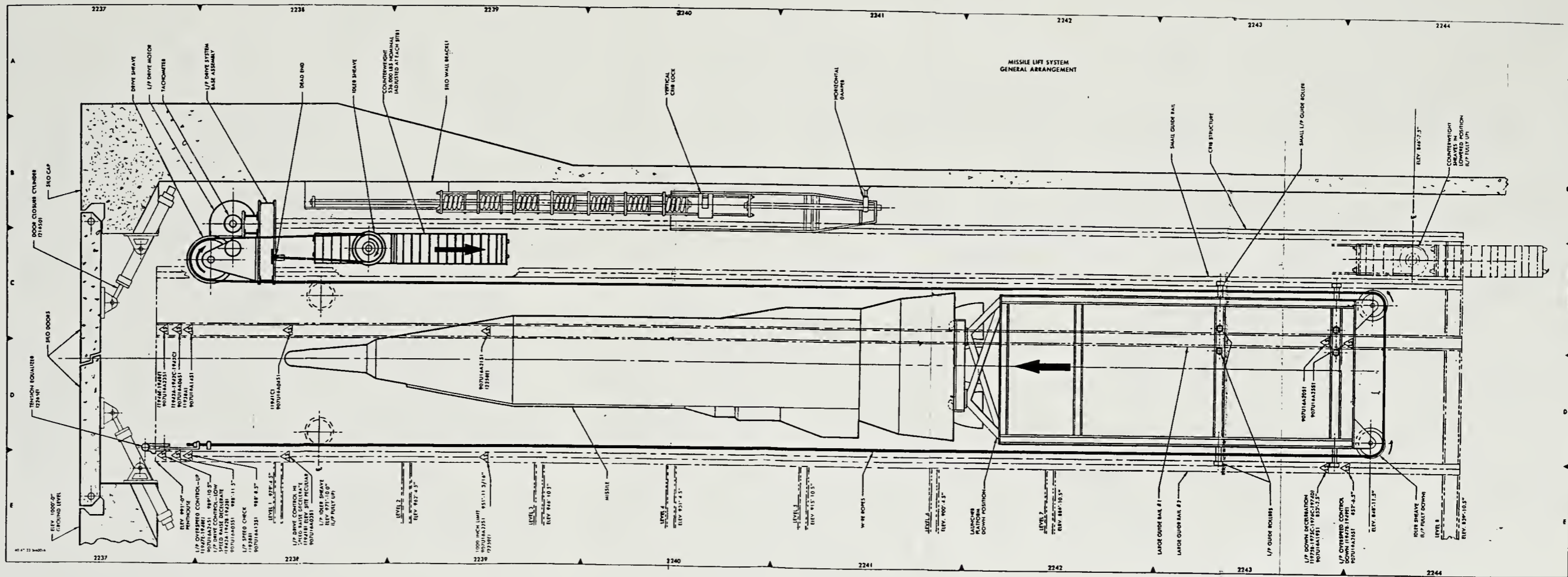
FIRST LEVEL

- A READY ROOM AND STORAGE
- B JANITOR'S ROOM
- C MEDICAL SUPPLY ROOM
- D TOILET
- E KITCHEN AND DINING
- F POWER DISTRIBUTION ROOM
- G HALL

SECOND LEVEL

- H BATTERY ROOM
- J OFFICE
- K COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT ROOM
- L LAUNCH CONTROL ROOM

Figure 1-7 Silo Launch Control Center



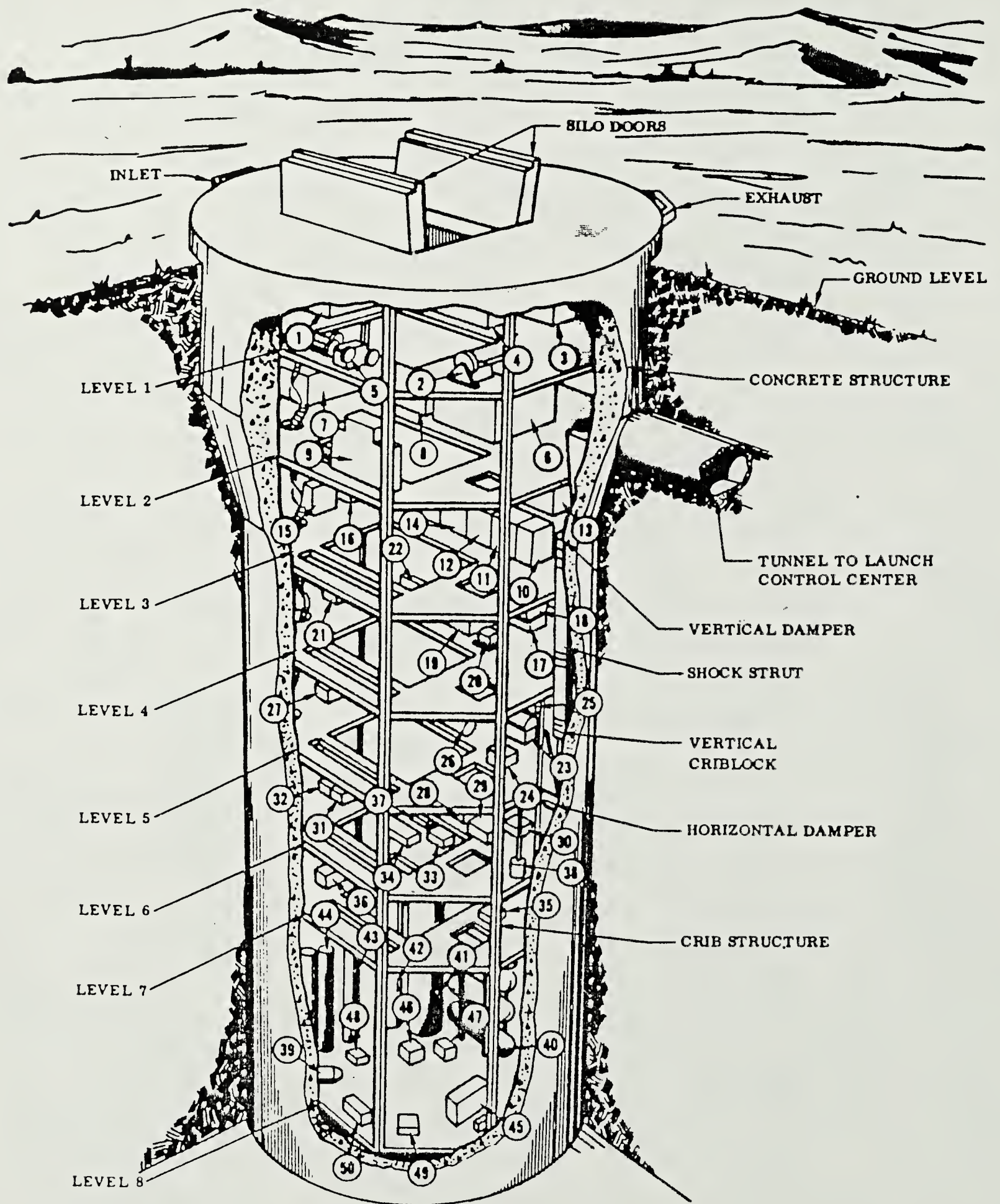


Figure 1-8 Silo Crib Arrangement

Selections by Project Jury:

- 1) Jean-Marc Abcarius/Christopher Burns (reside New York, NY)
- 2) Dis. Jecta Associates: Edward T. McMahon/Francesca Franchi (reside New York, NY)
- 3) Reenie Elliott (resides New York, NY)
- 4) Sargent Gardiner/Christan Chambers
- 5) Mark Horton/Dan Pitera/David Gill/Carlos Navarrete
- 6) Irie Architects and Associates: Anthony Dunne/Fiona Raby/Kei'ichi Irie (reside Tokyo, Japan)
- 7) Peter Lang (resides New York, NY)
- 8) James Langford with Sandi Hubbard (reside Dallas, Texas)
- 9) J.P. Maruszczak (resides Ft. Worth, TX)
- 10) Erik Morr (resides New York, NY)
- 11) Shayne O'Neil (resides Boston, MA)
- 12) Pearson Post Industries with Nuclear Recycling Consultants (located Providence, RI)
- 13) Patrick Peters, Longoria/Peters (resides Houston, Texas)
- 14) Wellington Reiter (resides Newtonville, MA)
- 15) Jeff Schofield (resides New York, NY)
- 16) Special Projects Office: John Bosch/Gordon Haslett/Gerard Kruunenberg (reside New York, NY)
- 17) Stardust Paradise Studio (located in State College, PA)
- 18) Jeff Vandeberg (resides New York, NY)
- 19) Mark West/Hada Subotincic (reside Islesboro, ME and Chicago, IL)

Selections by Project Committee:

- 20) David Ross Dike (resides Brooklyn, NY)
- 21) Starling Keene (resides New York, NY)
- 22) Johannes Knoops (resides New York, NY)
- 23) David Leclerc (resides Los Angeles, CA)
- 24) Office of Original Zone: Joey N. Shimoda (resides Venice, CA)
- 25) Scott Senseny/Todd Senseny (reside Convoy, OH)
- 26) Bob Shepherd/Ladd W. Woodland (reside San Francisco, CA)
- 27) Dan Willis with Merilee Meacock (reside State College, PA)

Project Jury

Vito Acconci, Neil Denari, Elizabeth Diller, Patricia Phillips, Lebbeus Woods

Project Committee

Jane Dodds, Gordon Gilbert, David Hanawalt, E. Maniatis Gianfranco Mantegna, Leo Modrcin, Carolyn Moskowitz, Kyong Park, Ken Saylor, Donna Selene Seftel, Julie Silliman, Robert Werthamer, Calvert Wright.

